set up some nuclear power units of varying capacity in the near future; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) and (b) Government have approved setting up of two nuclear powers stations of 2x235 MWe each at Kaiga and Rawatbhatta. Work has already commenced on these two projects. It is also proposed to start work on 4 more units of 235 MWe and 6 units of 500 MWe during the Seventh Plan.

Short fall in investment in public and private sectors

303. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the possibility of a shortfall in the sphere of investment, both public and private sectors in the last 2 years of the Seventh Five Year Plan; and

(b) if so, the reasons thereof and the steps taken by Government to ensure the growth rate projected in the Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI): (a) and (b) The likely level of investment in the five year period of the Seventh Plan is being assessed in the context of the mid-term appraisal of the Plan. Agricultural performance will be the critical factor in realising the growth target. Hence special efforts to expedite irrigation projects, vigorous implementation of special programmes to increase productivity in rice production in eastern region and in oilseeds production, measure to ensure the required growth in fertiliser consumption, production and distribution of seeds, and generation of electricity through better performance are being taken. The policy thrust in remaining years of the plan will be to raise the agricultural production so that overall grawth of 5 per cent is achieved with corresponding balance in sectoral structure.

Regional passport office at Ahmedabad

304. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Regional Passport Office at Ahmedabad has inadequate staff causing delay in the issuance of passports;

(b) what is the sanctioned strength of the staff, the actual strength at present and whether the vacancies are likely to be filled up;

(c) what is the number of applications for fresh passports that are pending clearance for more than three months and what is their percentage to total number of applications; and

(d) whether inadequate office accommodation is one of the reasons for inefficiency, causing delay and harassment to the people and if so, whether Government propose to shift Regional Passport Office at a better place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Most delays are on account of delayed police verification reports from State police authorities, and some due to incomplete information furnished in the application forms.

(b) The present sanctioned strength vis-a-vis actual strength of officers and

staff of Ahmedabad Passport Office in various grades is as under:

Post	Sanctioned strength	Actual strength
Group 'A'	4	2
Group 'B'	3	4
Group 'C'	66	59
Group 'D'	11	8

One Group 'A' officer (a PRO) is under orders of transfer and is likely to join at Ahmedabad by end of March, 1988.

One extra Superintendent in Group 'B' has been posted against a vacancy in Group 'A'. Action to fill up the vacancies in Group 'C' and 'D' posts is in hand.

(c) The passport applications pending for more than 3 months are: 2,756. These cases are 23.8 per cent of the total applications which are pending in Passport Office, Ahmedabad.

(d) No Sir.

Investment in North Eastern Region

305. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the North Eastern region is lagging behind by 30 per cent as compared with the rest of the country in terms of investment;

(b) what corrective measures are being taken to bring North Eastern region at par and whether there is any proposal to increase central sector investment and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the present capacity and estimated potentiality of resources like oil and natural gas and hydel power and whether the same are being exploited fully in North Eastern region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI): (a) and (b) In terms of investments being made by the country, the North Eastern region (NE) is not lagging behind the rest of the country. All the seven States of the NE are treated as special category States and are given special central assistance which also covers their non-plan gap. Approved plan allocation in terms of per capita for the States of NE including for the North Eastern Council (NEC) are placed at Statement I (*See* below). It shows that the plan investment per capita in favour of NE is much higher as compared to the average per capita allocation for the rest of the country. The statement showing central plan expenditure for the Sixth Plan for various States of the country is given as Statement-II (*See* below). It will be seen that the 7th Plan approved allocation for NE (including NEC) was 6.28 per cent of the all India 7th Plan allocation (States and UTs); and the central sixth plan expenditure was 4.67 per cent (excluding the unallocated portion) as against 3.88 per cent of country's population that lives in NE (1981 census). The per capita 7th Plan allocation (1981 census) for NE(including NEC) was Rs. 1934 as compared to Rs. 1165 for the country (excluding NE region).

Some of the other special measures taekn to bring about faster economic growth in the NE includes the following- (i) NE region states are treated as special category states for central assistance; (ii) The pattern of central assistance for the NE states including hill areas of Assam